(g) whether any of such spices are produced in bulk in Rajasthan; and

(h) if so, their names, production quantity and potential for export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Spices Board has conducted a market study under Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme of the Department of Commerce for export of Indian spice to the main stream US markets. A market study to assess the potential to improve the export of branded Indian cardamom in the Gulf region is also being done. The study has concluded that spices like black pepper, red pepper (chilli), cinnamon, cumin, ginger, turmeric, dehydrated garlic, oregano and poppy seed can be introduced under Indian brands in a phased manner in the mainstream segment, gourmet segment and private lable segment of the US market. Similarly, there is a large potential of Indian cardamom in the Gulf region.

(c) During the current year, the Spices Board has provided support for adoption of high tech and technology upgradation; setting up/upgradation of Quality Control Lab; International Standards Organisation (ISO)/Hazard Assessment and Critical Control Process (HACCP) Certification and packaging development to a number of beneficiaries. The Spices Board has also participated in international fairs along with exporters for export promotion of spices.

(d) The demand segments indentified by the Board are Vanilla, Herbal Spices, High Colour value chillies and all spices free of adulterants and with tolerable levels of aflatoxins, pesticide residues and contaminants.

(e) and (f) The Spices Board does not directly export spices. Spices Board promotes and facilitates export of Spices.

(g) and (h) Yes, Sir. Cumin and Coriander are the major spices produced in Rajasthan. Rajasthan produced 69093 MTs and 169830 MTs of Cumin and Coriander respectively during 2004-05. There is a considerable potential for export of these spices.

Steps to counter Pakistan in rice exports

312. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rice exporters have approached Government

for notifying an "evolved" grade, a hybrid with a natural, area-specific Basmati as one of the patents, of Indian Basmati as "Super" in order to boost rice exports and counter Pakistan in rice exports;

(b) whether Government have examined the request and if so, with what result; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Rice exporters have requested the Government for notification of the 'Super' variety of rice as 'Basmati' rice. The request has been examined and recommended to Dapartment of Agriculture & Cooperation for necessary Notification under the Seeds Act 1966.

Free trade deal between India and European Union

313. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a demand has been raised by United Kingdom to have free trade deal between India and European Union;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of countries with whom India has signed Free Trade Agreements; and

(d) the details of countries with whom India propose to have or expected to sign Free Trade Agreements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No formal proposal has been received from the United Kingdom which is a Member State of the European Union.

(c) India has signed Free Trade Agreements with Sri Lanka and Bhutan. India has signed a Framework Agreement for establishing FTA with Thailand. India has signed a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with Singapore which, *inter alia,* includes FTA in the areas of trade in goods and services and investments. India is also a signatory to the South Asian Free Trade Area Agreement (SAFTA) and Framework Agreement on the